

E

234

H 18



Descriptive key of the  
Valley Forge  
Historic memorial chair  
By John Shrack Haller.  
Philadelphia, 1884.





Class E234

Book H18

Copyright N<sup>o</sup> \_\_\_\_\_

**COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT.**









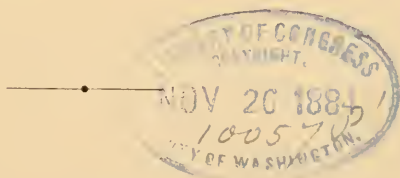


THE VALLEY FORGE HISTORIC MEMORIAL.



DESCRIPTIVE KEY  
OF THE  
VALLEY FORGE  
HISTORIC MEMORIAL CHAIR.

BY  
*John Shrack*  
J. S. HALLER.



PHILADELPHIA:  
JAS. B. RODGERS PRINTING COMPANY,  
52 and 54 North Sixth Street.  
1884.

Entered according to Act of Congress in the year 1884, by J. S. HALLER.

E 234  
M 18

# DESCRIPTIVE KEY

OF THE

## VALLEY FORGE HISTORIC MEMORIAL CHAIR.

---

### ORIGIN OF DESIGN.

ON the 19th of April, 1882, while journeying around to the many places of historic interest, situated at and near the city of Washington, we chanced to notice and visit the building containing the memorial blocks of marble and granite presented to occupy a space in the Washington national monument. We were amazed when viewing those memorials sent from all parts of the world, at the universal respect shown the name and memory of Washington.

Of the different memorials that attracted our particular attention were the following:

A memorial stone from a Temple erected in honor of Augustus, between two and three thousand years ago, that had stood on the banks of the Nile. A memorial stone from Braddock's Field, Pennsylvania. A memorial from the home of General John Stark, New Hampshire. A memorial from the descendants of the friends and neighbors of Washington. A memorial block of granite from the youthful State of Nevada, bearing the inscription "All for our country, 1881." Seeing so many memorials to the right, and to the left, the idea occurred to us that there should be a memorial stone here, at the Capital of the nation, from the Valley Forge.

The next point of interest visited was the Executive Mansion, and there we were confronted by a life-size oil painting of a personage who only recently was known to the nation, Mrs. R. B.

Hayes. After passing this work of art, a memorial of this noted lady, and the block of granite from the youthful Nevada, surely we thought there should be a memorial here from the Valley Forge. We next visited the conservatory attached to the Executive Mansion; while there this idea suggested itself: make a chair of laurel and other wood, from the historic hills at the Valley Forge, and present it to the nation for the use of the President.

For a month, or more, the making of a rustic chair was revolved in our mind together with the thought, how can the privations endured by the Continental army, be held up creditably to the historical prominence they deserve?

The different ideas are given in the order of their suggestion: First was to give all the prominence possible to **Thirteen Stars**, intended to represent the number of states engaged in the struggle for Liberty and Independence. Nearly all of the different original states were represented at Valley Forge, by some one of their able generals being posted on a portion of the lines of defence on this hallowed ground; consecrated by the defenders of Liberty in those, the darkest hours of the struggle.

In addition to the thirteen stars add **Twenty-five** more, the number thus representing **Thirty-eight** stars, the present number of states in the national constellation; also have **Eleven** smaller stars to represent the territories of the United States. The entire number of stars is thus produced, to illustrate what has been achieved by the army's keeping together on those historic hills during that pitiless cold winter, after successive defeat; amid destitution and suffering that has no parallel in any country's history.

The next idea suggested, was our seeing **Thirteen Stars** arranged in a circle on a coin, bearing date 1783. The arrangement of those stars suggested the idea to search history to know the date of the adoption of the present design of national flag, and if adopted before the occupation of Valley Forge by the patriots. History records the fact that the Continental Congress adopted the present design of flag, with its field of blue and thirteen stars arranged in a circle, on the 14th of June, 1777.

The first flag of the new and present design of our national banner was made by Mrs. Anna M. Ross, and was without a

doubt, first unfurled to the breeze in battle at Brandywine, Sept. 11th, 1777. We are assured by other researches, that the flag with its miniature constellation of stars, waved above the half-clad and famished patriots at Valley Forge; in those days in its early youth. We therefore, concluded to locate the flag on a prominent part of the intended historical effort, that the difference in the number of stars on the blue field of the flag, then and now, might be more apparent, and illustrate the contrast how the flag appeared more than a century ago; and how to-day, with thirty-eight stars, the result of what was endured on that historic ground.

The next idea was to put the words: "**From the Valley Forge**" on the chair. The word "**From**" is located centrally at the top of the back of the chair; the letters of the word are in gold on nickel plate. The word "**The**" is located just below the word "From," and near the centre and top of back of chair. These letters of the word The are rustic, formed of laurel. The word "**Valley**" is located on the right arm of chair, letters of laurel. The word "**Forge**" is placed below the left arm of chair, letters of word also of laurel.

The idea next suggested was, that some historical quotations should have an appropriate location. Next came the thought, that a **Bust of Washington** should be centrally located, and if possible, overlooking the entire effort and every occupant of the chair. Next occurred the suggestion, put the motto **Virtue, Liberty and Independence**, on some central part of chair.

Thus far, these are only ideas. We must journey to the historic slopes at Valley Forge, to see if it is possible to find sufficient of the severely crooked laurel, that the different suggestions may be used after the wood has been thoroughly seasoned. In the later part of the month of May, 1882, we visited the encampment grounds, and found suitable material after successive journeys; to warrant the hope that in due time the ideas would be illustrated and the historic memories of this spot noticed, that the busy age has passed by.

## Historical Outline Sketch of Valley Forge

And KEY of DESIGN, intended to illustrate what has been accomplished through the privations endured by the patriots from the thirteen original States of the Union at the Valley Forge; where they froze, starved and died, rather than desert that youthful flag and their Chief, the Father of his Country; whose example alone, endeared the troops in their devotion to him and the cause they were struggling so nobly to win. It was at Valley Forge amid the destitution and sufferings of the patriots, that their commander sought the shades of the forest, and on bended knees implored aid from the Divine Giver of all blessings.

Since those cold December days of 1777, when that army, numbering 11,098 men, marched up the old Gulf Road, and that flag with its constellation of **Thirteen Stars** waved above the suffering patriots as they marched o'er the frozen ground and snow, along that line of march, stained with their life's blood from their shoeless, bleeding feet; that flag has waved on every sea and been honored in every land. Has floated in the breeze above the clouds; yet, to-day, that flag does not wave o'er the grave of a single patriot who found a resting place there, that their hopes of Liberty and Independence might not be lost forever.

The order of arrangement of the stars on the **Field of Blue** on the flag, varies from the original flag adopted by Congress, for the purpose of illustrating more vividly the fact, that at Valley Forge was the pivotal, or turning point in the struggle.

Hence **Twelve** gold stars encircle the **Thirteenth** star; this arrangement represents the different States assembled at Valley Forge, on the soil of Pennsylvania, determined to rise or fall together in this camp, while those not on the sick list and but scantily clad, stood up shoulder to shoulder on this first national parade ground and school in actual field discipline, and where the Baron Von Steuben, the veteran disciplinarian, trained the troops to such efficiency that ever after the occupation of Valley Forge

were the Continental armies successful. The intended design in having the **Star Headed Nails** of different sizes were various. One object was to represent a **Large State** with a large star, the more brilliant surface a star possesses is intended to represent a State with an undimmed lustre of prosperity since its early settlement. Another object in designing a **Large** and **Small Star** was to illustrate in a novel manner the varied difference in the number of square miles each State possesses; for instance, **Rhode Island**, with her area of 1,250 square miles of territory, is represented by a small star. If any citizen of that State does not favor such miniature representation he must take comfort in the fact that the narrative penned by one of her most illustrious sons, **Maj. Gen. Nath'l Greene**, has been quoted and given a prominent location, attached as it were to the flag, on the engraved plate of German silver.

To the State of **Virginia** is allotted a star having as large and brilliant a surface as the limited space will allow, in respect to the State that produced such illustrious sons as **Washington**, **Jefferson**, and **Patrick Henry**.

The **Two Stars** alike on the design located at the top of back of chair, one on each side, is intended to represent the States of **New Hampshire** and **Massachusetts**. To the first-named State we refer to history that the fact may be produced where the first contest in behalf of Liberty took place, at **Concord, N. H.**, April 19th, 1775. In reference to the State of **Massachusetts**, we wish to extend the knowledge of the fact of that State having sent the largest number of troops during the struggle for Liberty, the number being 68,000 men.

To the State of **North Carolina** is assigned a star of the first magnitude, although differing from those given **New York**, **Pennsylvania** and **Virginia**, for having produced the famous Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence, that without a doubt was the guide in the production of the immortal **Declaration of Independence** framed and adopted at Philadelphia and proclaimed to the world July 4th, 1776.

The plating of gold leaf around every star assigned to a State is intended to show the **Halo** of prosperity that attends every State, the result of the combined efforts of the patriots at Valley Forge.

The **Eleven Smaller Stars**, nearly all located on the left side of chair with their halo of blue around every star except one, is intended to represent the territories belonging to the United States. A tracing of **Red, White** and **Blue** colors encircle every star.

Near the centre of the **Arched** piece of laurel from which the flag is apparently suspended on the back of chair, is a nickel plated **Keystone** bearing the inscription, "1777. Valley Forge Then & Now. 1884."

The material from which the **Bust** and **White Stripes** in the flag were made was cut from the redoubts, Ft. Washington and Huntingdon situated immediately in front of the inner line of defences.

The **Red Stripes** in the flag were taken principally from a large cedar more than two feet in diameter across the trunk: its unusual size warrants us in saying that it stood there a silent witness of the patriots' sufferings amidst the raging pestilence and scanty supply of food.

The **White Piece** of wood standing upright on the left side of chair with **Rustic Monogram** of the letters **U. S.** near the centre of piece and outlined on the centre of cover of key, is a branch of cedar cut from the spot where — Washington's **Marque** was pitched on the day the troops arrived at the Valley Forge and where the Chief remained and shared the rigors of that wintry blast until his troops had constructed their log huts, when the commander secured limited room under the roof of the Potts mansion near the river and Valley creek.

The **Observer** will notice the stars assigned the thirteen original states have a larger halo of gold around them than the stars intended to represent the states that have been added to the national constellation of states since the Revolution.

It is the **Thirteen Star** headed nails that hold the main framework of the chair together; every one of the stars allotted the original states has the **Initials** of the state beside the plate around the star.

In arranging the **Thirteen** states in the order they are located, our endeavor was to locate the state whereon Valley Forge is situated midway on the then narrow belt of the original states nearly all then bordering on the Atlantic coast, the frontier limits

of civilization then extending westward a short distance beyond the Susquehanna River.

We defer designating the remainder of the stars on the chair, for the object of the present endeavor is to produce the credit due the patriots from the thirteen states in their efforts to secure Virtue, Liberty and Independence to the early colonists who sought a refuge on those shores from British oppression.

Of what avail the virtues of any people if not secured by Liberty and Independence!

These priceless legacies were secured through the privations endured at Valley Forge, and are enjoyed alike by all to-day in our great republic.

The tides of battle never ebbed and flowed along and over these lines of defense; the sabre, the bayonet, and the bullet of the enemy ne'er thrust their course through the noble forms of the patriots while they watched, waited, toiled and hoped for the dawn of spring that they might away to victory and leave this camp, a rendezvous of starvation and suffering.

Alas, many never left those hillsides where the great luminary of day had so oft' outlined their half-clad and gaunt forms. They rest in unmarked and almost unknown graves in the immediate vicinity of the camp.

By the side of the **Left Arm** of chair is a **Book or Newspaper** pocket; on a level with the seat of chair, in front are the letters **U. S.**; natural growth, one letter on each side of chair. A **Plan** of the encampment is traced in colors on the back of the chair, back of the flag. The **Two** different lines of defence are shown, the outer or front line most exposed to attack is worthy of study, to know how the Commander-in-chief had posted his bravest and most energetic generals:

**General Muhlenberg**, of Pennsylvania, the liberty-loving parson, in command of Virginia troops, guarding the extreme eastern part of the **Front Line**, and more than two miles from headquarters; this is the left of the line.

Next in importance on a line of defence is to have a dashing, reliable commander posted on the centre of the line, in command of trustworthy troops, that the line may not be broken and expose the flanks. **General Glover**, of Massachusetts, and his Marblehead fisherman and sailors, held this part of the line.

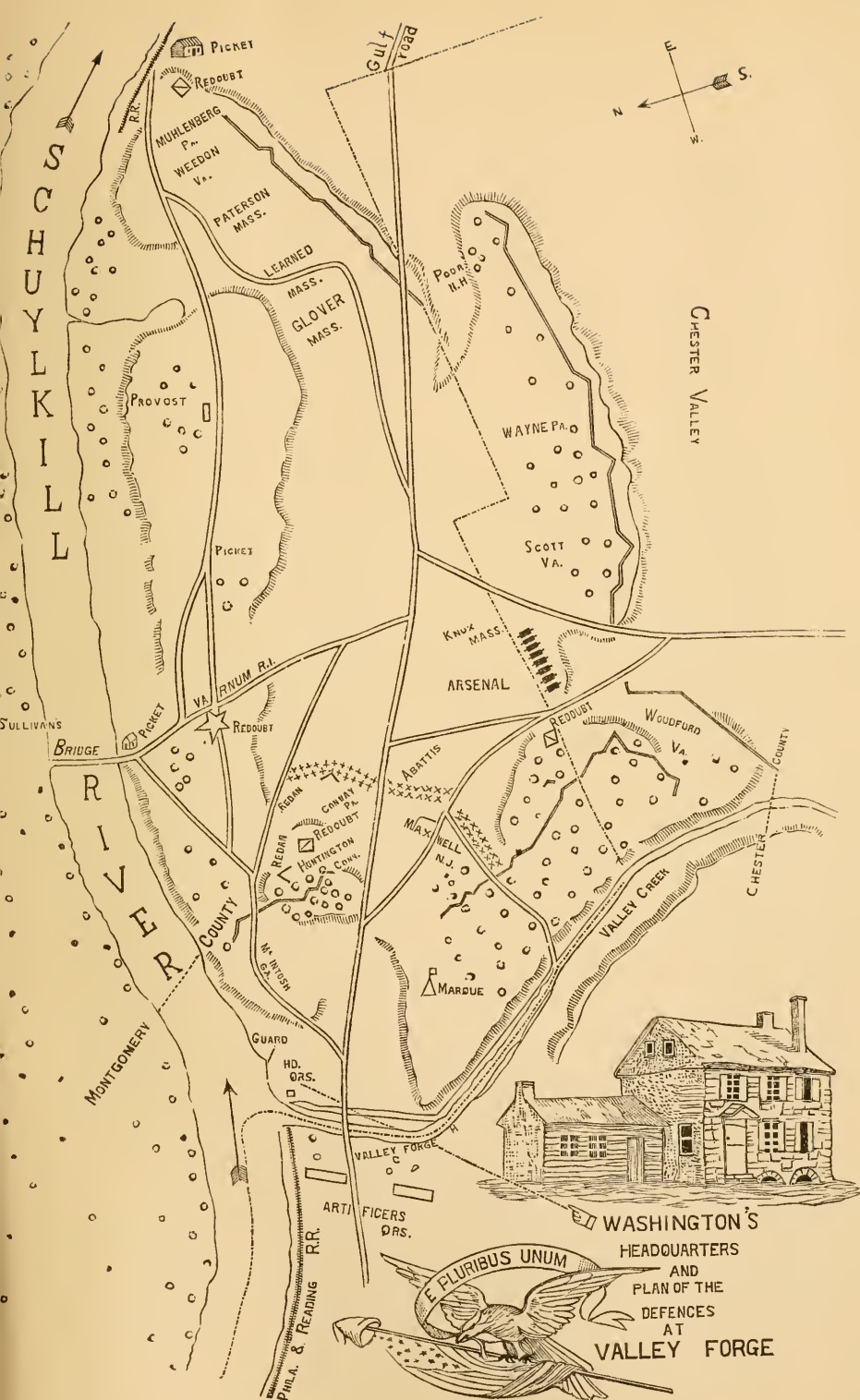
Next in order was to have a trusty commander posted on the right of the line; there was the **Virginian, Scott**. Midway between the position of Scott and Glover, was where the intrepid **Wayne** was posted, that in the event of the centre, or right-flank being routed, there would soon be prompt and vigorous assistance. The **Inner Line** of defence was designed mainly for shelter, should there have been serious disaster on the front line.

The **Location** of the generals' names on the plan, is about the **Locality** where the different commands had built their **Log-huts**. Many of the roads shown on the plan were only used by the army, and are now no longer in use; smiling fields cover their sites. A greater part of the encampment tract is under cultivation, some portions being very rocky, and the portion along the inner line and Valley Creek covered with a forest of chestnut timber. At different places in the forest many of the **Sites** of the huts can yet be noticed. The inner line of defences, under cover of the forest, is in a good state of preservation. The **Front** line has most generally been leveled, yet the embankment can be seen along the ridge that borders on the Chester Valley.

A **Small Design** of the National **Coat of Arms** of the United States, is located beneath the plan on the back of chair. A view of the **Headquarters Mansion** is placed on the plan; the hand and dotted line indicates the location on the encampment grounds.

The following tribute quoted from Thacher's Military Journal of the Revolution, evidently manifests the regard the troops entertained of the labors of their Chief, amid the cares and duties of his responsible position, his unceasing devotion and disinterested zeal combined to stay the attachment of the troops to the cause, when surrounded by the slender comforts of the encampment. "No man perhaps ever had a greater combination of vexatious evils and uncontrollable obstacles to encounter than this incomparable patriot."

A few of the obstacles might be noted as being the deranged Quarter-master and Commissary Generals' departments of the army; the constantly expiring terms of enlistment of the troops from the different States; the want of sectional unity, and the cabalistic intrigue of a number of officers in the effort to supplant Washington in the tedious progress of directing the work in the struggle.





Here at this encampment were a number of officers who had rallied with their commands at the first roll of the drum and booming of cannon at Bunker Hill, and were also witnesses of the scene when the Chief assumed command of the army beneath the Liberty Tree on Boston Common. A few of the prominent names we note as being present on those occasions, were Generals Greene, Sullivan, Learned, Paterson, Knox, and Glover, who had marched with the first body of organized armed men to the siege of Boston ; in addition to the number were Captains Daniel Morgan and Alexander Hamilton.

Among the many officers who had commands when the army was here, were a number of titled rank from foreign legions, who had volunteered and continued in the service until killed in action or the final siege at Yorktown had concluded their terms of service. They were: Generals La Fayette, De Kalb, Steuben, Pulaski and Duportail. The Americans were: Generals Wayne, Knox, Poor, Scott, McIntosh, Light-horse Harry Lee, Colonel John Laurens, and Lieutenant James Monroe.

Were it possible for the dead that slumber in those unnoticed and neglected graves to rise up for a moment and behold the great change that has been wrought on the face of the country over which they had so often trodden on their many long, weary marches, how great would be their surprise to see the steam throated locomotive speeding along the northern borders of this encampment near the river. Would not those patriots with one accord exclaim, this is now a land of peace and prosperity, and men need not now endure the privations of an apparent forlorn hope by shouldering a flint-lock musket and pace to and fro on those ramparts, for Liberty and Independence are now secure.

For many long years the frosts and snows have descended on the laurel growing in the shades of the forest near the Valley Forge ; a few of the natural crooks are now transferred to the light, a gift to the nation for the exclusive use of the honorable successors of the immortal Washington, who first directed the ship of state.

On the **Cover of Key**, the **Date** at the **Top** and **Foot** of the page, is intended to refer to the dawn and close of the revolutionary era. **An Eagle** with half folded wings at the top of page as if from a distant mountain peak, overlooks the then impending struggle, and only soars away on outstretched wings assured of

final triumph on receipt of the news announcing **Franklin's Treaty** of alliance with France, which was received and celebrated on the 6th of May, 1778, with great rejoicing and solemn thanksgiving services held at the head of each brigade by their respective chaplains.

On the **Back of Chair**, and just above the base of bust, is a **Silver Plate** that was formerly an old coin, the inscription and profile is so nearly worn away by use, that the date can scarcely be read, the date is 1783, part of the inscription is Rex III Dei Gratia ; within this inscription has been stamped thirteen small stars, gold plated, arranged in a circle, within this circle of stars there is a **Monogram** of the letters **U. S.**

**Height** of chair, 4 feet, 9 inches ; width of seat, 22 inches ; weight of chair, 62 pounds ; number of pieces of wood in chair, 151.

On the **Engraved Plate** attached to the flag is engraved the autograph of Washington wrote: "that our difficulties and distresses are certainly great and such as wound the feelings of humanity." Maj. Gen. Nath'l Greene wrote: "the troops are getting naked ; they were seven days without meat and several days without bread."

**Size of Flag**,  $11\frac{1}{4}$  by 18 inches.

The Encampment evacuated by the Army June 19th, 1778.













LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 011 800 020 1

